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IN MEMORIAM



ADDRESS OF
HON. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW
OF NEW YORK

UPON THE LIFE AND
CHARACTER OF

HON. EDMUND W. PETTUS
(LATE A SENATOR FROM THE
STATE OF ALABAMA)

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE
OF THE UNITED STATES
APRIL 18, 1908



WASHINGTON
1908

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ADDRESS
OR
HON. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW.

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES ON THE LATE SENATORS FROM ALABAMA.

MR. BANKHEAD. Mr. President, I offer the resolutions which I send to the desk.

The Secretary read the resolutions, as follows:

R. S. C. 1. That the Senate hear, heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Hon. JOHN T. MORGAN and EDMUND W. PETTIS, late Senators from the State of Alabama.

R. S. C. 2. That as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased Senators, the session of the Senate be now suspended to enable their relatives to pay proper tribute to their high characters and distinguished public service.

R. S. C. 3. That the Secretary communicate a copy of these resolutions to the House of Representatives.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT. The question is an agreeing to the resolutions.

The resolutions were unanimously agreed to.

MR. DEPEW. Mr. President, when a man dies in youth or in his prime with years of usefulness before him, the sentiment is one of despair. Every year which one enjoys in health and the full possession of all his faculties beyond the Psalmist's limit of life is a source of gratitude. If he is still at fourscore in the forenoon of the battle when the summons comes, the exultation rends the ear and applauds.

It occurred through her two venerable and great Senators, Morgan and Pettis, had in this body a unique distinction. They were representatives, or as they might be called, ambassadors of no second state, one 83 and the other 86, and by reason of their ability and power destined to reelection for another term. Their birth, reward, their century, present, past, and probable history no parallel in our history. Senator Morgan was the first man of the statesmen of the Republic

His great ability, vast acquirements, profound erudition, indomitable industry, self-sacrificing devotion to the public welfare and rare eloquence have placed him in a niche of the temple of American fame. He possessed an almost unequalled command of English pure and undefiled, and in giving utterance to his thought it was done with such correct expression that after a running debate in which he took a principal part and which would last a day, his sentences were so perfect that his speech required neither review nor correction. More than any other of our statesmen he resembled the great English writer and orator, Edmund Burke. His colleague, Senator PETTUS, was a good lawyer and an able judge, but preeminently, in all his characteristics, the soldier. The friendship and interdependence of these associate representatives of Alabama upon each other and their daily intercourse was one of the most interesting and attractive pictures in the Senate. The General followed with awe and admiration the lead of the veteran and distinguished Senator, and the slender and fragile Senator seemed to lean with reverential regard upon the vigorous, aggressive and gigantic General, but at the moment when their State seemed unanimously resolved to keep them here without limit as to time the summons came to both, and they died as they had lived, neighbors and friends, possessing to the last the full vigor of their physical and mental powers.

Such an event inspires many reflections upon youth and age. The tribute of the world is given wholly to youth. Its admiration is for early achievement. It is apt to dismiss age or be impatient that it lingers upon the stage. I remember a distinguished English statesman remarking to me with disappointment and disgust after Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian campaign had electrified the country, "There is no use waiting for old men to die. After seventy they go on forever." The brightest pages of history, the most brilliant passages in oratory and the highest flights of rhetorical expression are devoted to the achievements of precocious genius. In our day everything is subjected to the merciless analysis of science and research. The most valued traditions of childhood are shattered by the cold

processes of historical delving. William Tell becomes a myth and Arnold Winkelried an exaggerated tradition. By the same bloodless dissection alienists and physiologists are now endeavoring to prove that in the formation and growth of the brain an unnatural and unhealthy early development tends either to degeneracy or, in rare instances, where there is great natural power, to extraordinary and morbid maturity in infancy and youth. It is the inspiration and despair of the schools that Alexander the Great was a wise ruler at 18 and conquered all Greece at 20. At 26 he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer and died at 30. His achievements and his tragic death were alike due to an abnormal brain which made him meet the characterization of Pope, "The youth who all things but himself subdued." In this he stands in marked contrast with Cæsar, who matured more slowly and naturally, and was at the zenith of his powers when assassinated at 56, and of whom Pope also said, "Cæsar was the world's great master and his own." Hannibal was in sight of the fulfilment of the vow to his father of the destruction of Rome when he was 31, but then his genius seemed to decay. Napoleon had reached the zenith of his powers at 35 and at Waterloo was the victim of premature senility. Byron's genius began to fade in his early thirties, and he died before he was 40. Pitt was prime minister at 25, and the maturity of his gifts was under 40. Goethe, the great German genius, and one of the greatest the world ever saw, on the other hand, grew normally to maturity and was no exception to nature's laws. The work which gave him universal recognition, "Iphigenia," was written when he was 37, but his immortality is largely based upon "Faust," which was published when he was 55. He lived without any abatement of mind until he was 53. Thiers, having accomplished a world of literary work and done much political service, saved France from total dismemberment at 71 and retained three years after in the presidency to consolidate his work. Von Moltke at 71 had become one of the most famous generals of the centuries, while Bismarck late in life consolidated the German people into one Empire under the great sovereign

who wielded the scepter vigorously until past 90. Gladstone's most triumphant campaign, and one of the most remarkable in English history, was won by a stumping tour of unequalled vigor and versatility when he was 84. The dead line of 50, which had been the rule of the past, no longer exists in our day. Shakespeare divided life into seven ages.

At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the **Justice**,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
So he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloons,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange, eventful history,
Is second childhoodness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

But Shakespeare died at 50.

Mr. President, we have only to look about this Senate to note the marvelous difference between Shakespeare's period and our own. It was then the survival of the fittest who possessed the vigor of constitution and strength which could resist the pestilence, plague, and disease common to the unsanitary conditions of the home, uncleanliness of the person, and wild excesses and intemperance of the times. According to Shakespeare's view, "the lean and slipper'd pantaloons" came between 50 and 60, and second childhood, "Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything," between 60 and 70. But in our day the leaders in the professions, the captains of industry, and the controlling minds in public life are largely those who look with equanimity upon three score and ten.

The life of Senator PLATT is one of those American careers which are the perennial inspirations of our youth. Equipped with a vigorous constitution and a good education as his only capital, he began the battle of life with an optimistic cheerfulness and indomitable perseverance which were his characteristics for the succeeding sixty-five years. He was admitted to the bar in 1842, and was in the active practice of his profession, except when on the bench or in wars, for sixty-four years. He early won the favor of a large constituency, and two years after his admission to the bar, at the age of 23, was elected solicitor for the seventh circuit of Alabama. Heredity is either the curse or the blessing of us all. The dominant characteristic in the blood may skip several generations to ultimately assert itself with double force. It was the grandfather, who was a soldier of the Revolution, whose militant and virile spirit was reincarnated in his grandson. The call to arms in the Mexican war drew him instantly from the brilliant career upon which he had entered in legal and political life and he marched to Mexico as a lieutenant of an Alabama company. The stirring experiences of that campaign, with its battles and marches, its assaults and victories, were exquisite happiness to the young and enthusiastic soldier.

He returned from the war at the time when the country was excited, as it had never been before, by the gold discoveries in California. The romance and perils of the West appealed overwhelmingly to this adventurous spirit. That he did not have the money for this expensive trip was no obstacle to a man to whom obstacles were invitations. He started on horseback and found his way across the Great Plains of the West when its trails were infested by bands of hostile Indians. When he arrived the situation did not interest him. His was not the nature to endure hardships and the wild life of a mining camp of that period simply for gold. Glory was his ambition, gold only of value so far as it might help him to attain that end. The voyages and marches of the Forty-niners are a picturesque chapter in the story of the settlement and development of our Territories. They were practical Argonauts, whose

search had its reward for some in fortunes greater than were possible to the seekers of the Golden Fleece, but for most of them bitter disappointment and unmarked graves. The sordid side of these early struggles on the golden coast repelled this chivalric knight and we find him soon returned to renewed activities at the bar and in the public life of his State. He had been brought up in the strictest school of State rights. The resolutions of 1789 were his political gospel and John C. Calhoun his political guide. One of his last acts in the Senate was to vote against the railroad rate bill, notwithstanding the public sentiment in its favor, because he believed that it violated in principle his fundamental beliefs in the rights and sovereignty of the States. He was among the earliest to enlist for the war in the Confederate army, and believed as thoroughly in the righteousness of his cause as did his patriot grandfather in that of the Revolution.

His commanding figure made him an ideal soldier. He was elected a major of his regiment, but his gallantry upon many bloody battlefields soon won him the stars of a brigadier-general. His impetuosity and daring made him a prisoner of war, but he received the consideration of his captors which gallant soldiers always pay to heroic enemies against whom have gone the fortunes of the fight. The civil war ended, he again resumed the activities of peace. Having vigorously and conscientiously done the work of his laborious profession and accepted many honors from his fellow-citizens, he thought that at 75 he would like to retire to the dignity and congenial duties of a Federal judge, with its permanency of office, securing the pleasures of comfortable and serene old age, but he was told he was too old. This stirred the soldier to conflict, and with the answer, "If I am too old to be a judge, I am young enough to be a United States Senator," he entered a contest before the people for the place. He broke down all opposition and captured the imagination and support of the people, and at 76 was triumphantly elected Senator of the United States from the State of Alabama. When the time for his reelection came, he was 83 years of age, but there was no oppo-

sition, and his triumph was complete. It was one of his most gratifying recollections that his second election cost only \$1, the legal fee for his certificate. He was reelected at the end of his second for a third term, which, if he had lived, would have carried him to the age of 95. There is no such record in the whole history of the Senate.

I served with him on the Committee on the Judiciary. He never missed a meeting, and his reports upon the questions referred to him as a subcommittee were not only able and judicial, but possessed a picturesque originality and humor which gave them the flavor of that Elizabethan literature of which he had been all his life an ardent student. His humor was resistless, and we all remember the occasions when the driest debate was suddenly lifted into life and his side enormously helped by the ripple of laughter which disturbed this august assemblage at one of his sallies. As impregnable were his opinions, so unshakable were his friendships, and he would make any sacrifice to aid or defend those whom he loved.

Side by side in the old churchyard in the village of Selma lie these great statesmen of Alabama, not of Alabama alone, but of the United States. As the years go by that will become sacred ground and a mecca for the youth of the South who would get inspiration for great careers in the civil or military life of their country. The Senators who were privileged to serve with MORGAN and PETTUS unite in paying to their memories the deepest and tenderest tributes of respect and admiration. Long after we are gone, among the cherished traditions of this body will be the recollection of the lives, the genius, the work, and the picturesque personality and originality of these historical figures fighting back death and serving their country when past four-score years, and dying, as they had lived, together.

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